

SAFE Companies UPDATE

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CONGRATULATIONS TO 36 NEW SAFETY LEADERS!

Every company that becomes SAFE certified is leading the way for making BC's forest industry safer by meeting the sector's safety standards and fostering a worksite where all workers return home safely every day. As of June 6, 639 companies have successfully completed their certification. Congratulations to the following 36 companies, which are the latest to become SAFE certified:

A.K.D. Reforestation Ltd., Quesnel • Allen Hopwood Enterprises Ltd., Courtenay • ANSA Trucking Ltd., Houston • Arrow Lakes Logging Ltd., Nakusp • B.R.I Security & Consulting Services Ltd., Lake Cowichan • B-2 Ranch Ltd., Hixon • Bachand Trucking Ltd., Campbell River • Chase Creek Cattle Co., Chase • Cuddeback Holdings Ltd., Valemont • Dacon Equipment Ltd., Mission • Dan Connal Contracting Ltd., Hope • Duz Cho Logging Partnership Limited, McLeod Lake • G. Tress Contracting Ltd., Golden • Galahad Enterprises Inc., Bashaw • Garry Hewins contracting Ltd., Charlie Lake • H.I.S. Ventures Limited, Kamloops • J&B Forest Products Ltd., Port McNeil • Jacob Sallenbach Logging Ltd., Vavenby • Kash Contracting Ltd., Kamloops • KLM Industries, Campbell River • M.L. Brown Lumber Ltd., Merritt • North Coast Handling Ltd., Kitimat • Pacific Custom Log Sorting Ltd., Coquitlam • Poor Boy Enterprises Ltd., Port McNeill • Quinsam Excavating Ltd., Campbell River • Ralph Nelson-Smith Logging Ltd., Merritt • Revelstoke ForTech Contracting Ltd., Revelstoke • Rite-Cut Enterprises Ltd., Prince George • Rugged Mountain Contracting Ltd., Comox • Shadforth Log Scaling Ltd., Nanaimo • Silva Services Ltd., Duncan • Summit Roadbuilding Ltd., Terrace • Timberline Resources Ltd., Powell River • Transwood Timber Ltd., Mission • Van Isle Falling Ltd., Courtenay • Westwood Fibre Ltd., Kamloops

STAYING HIGH ON SAFETY

Their work involves some of the most unique kind of falling in coastal BC in some very unique settings. Fallers might be climbing conifers up to 40 metres

high, then topping them for heli-logging or spiral pruning them to make them wind-firm. Or they might use more conventional falling or pruning techniques, but in very selective ways to protect wetlands or open up views while keeping the original parkland setting.

Such challenges are par for the course for Alternative Forest Operations Ltd (AFO), based in Crofton on Vancouver Island. Started three years ago by Sig Kemmler, his son, Jason, and family friend, Bridger Schmidt, the company was SAFE certified in July 2007.



AFO'S SAFE TEAM (L-R): President and general manager, Sig Kemmler, and operations managers Bridger Schmidt and Jason Kemmler.

"We do bid on the more day-to-day type of stuff, but we also take on the more challenging and difficult projects," says Sig, who started in the forest industry in 1977. Today, AFO has an excellent reputation for safety. But it wasn't always that way.

In 2006, faller certification was established in the industry and AFO complied. Shortly thereafter, a crew member suffered a minor injury and some equipment was damaged, and WorkSafe BC shut them down.

"It was a real slap in the face for me, because I always believed we were very safe," says Sig. "But in actual fact the standards we had to meet and the way we operated wasn't consistent, which is the mentality that most fallers had – we'll do this to pass the exam, and then we'll go back to business as usual."

CONTINUED ►

639 SAFE certified companies = Safety Leaders

SAFE Companies UPDATE

PAGE 2

10 June 2008

But one of the company visions is to be the safest and the best, and so they looked at ways to close the gap. That included becoming SAFE certified, which has helped them to see even more gaps in procedures and to evolve their safety culture on a day-to-day basis. That means bringing most of the contract fallers they hire up to their safety standards, and that has a price.

TOP PERFORMANCE: A faller uses cables and "claw" equipment to move from treetop to treetop.



"What we are looking for is a level playing field in terms of accommodating the costs involved in upping the level of safety when you have a lot of sub-contractors like we do. We haven't found that, so one of my focuses is honoring everything we said we'd do and know to do, and not have it be so costly," Sig says.

Part of that includes "educating" the forest industry on what AFO does and how, so they organized a demonstration in Port Alberni this spring for 60 people, including reps from WorkSafe BC, who were interested in the techniques and safety aspects of wind-firming.

"It was really an exciting opportunity," says Sig. "There's no question that the forest industry is in very challenging times, and we are here to stay! Safety is and will continue to be a critical aspect of our business success."



SAFETY ALERT

BE BEAR AWARE

People who work in BC's forests are often working in prime bear habitat. Bears generally avoid people, but with the ever-increasing spread of human activities, conflicts are inevitable. The following tips for workers

are from the Whistler-based Get Bear Smart Society, which is dedicated to progressive management that reduces human/bear encounters and creates safe environments for both people and bears. This information may one day be essential to your safety:

1. Learn about bears. Understand what their behaviors mean, and know how to react to an encounter or attack.
2. If you're working in grizzly country, make sure you can tell the difference between a black and a grizzly bear.
3. Stay alert! Look for signs of recent bear activity. Work and travel in a group when possible.
4. Don't surprise bears. Warn bears of your presence (e.g. talking).
5. Don't attract bears or reward them with food. Carry your food/garbage in a portable, bear-resistant food canister.
6. Be proficient in first aid. Carry sufficient medical supplies.
7. Inform others of your plans. Carry 2-way communication devices.
8. A well-trained dog that listens to voice commands can be very useful in detecting and deterring bears.
9. Carry bear spray as a first line of defence.
10. Place electric fences around overnight camping sites.
11. Train yourself in the use of non-lethal deterrents and keep supplies handy.

For more information on working in bear country, visit <http://www.bearsmart.com/dummies/WorkingBearCountryGuideNA.pdf>

NO NEED TO PURCHASE WHMIS TRAINING MATERIALS

WorkSafeBC has been receiving inquiries from employers regarding safety training for the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). Employers want to know what's required by federal and provincial WHMIS legislation — whether they must purchase workplace training from companies/businesses offering these services in order to be in compliance, and whether training provided by these companies/businesses is endorsed by WorkSafeBC. The bottom line is these businesses are not certified by WorkSafeBC, nor is it necessary to purchase this training to comply with the regulations. In fact, employers may develop their own materials and conduct their own in-house training to be in compliance.

More information about WHMIS information, resources, and training materials is available at <http://www2.worksafefbc.com/Topics/WHMIS/Home.asp>



BC Forest Safety Council
Unsafe is Unacceptable

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